CIVILIZING THE UTES.

Soon This Once Haughty Savage Will Be a Plain Farmer.

It can be stated on what is regarded as authoritative information from Washington that within a very short period the bulk of the southern Ute reservation, in southwestern Colorado, will be parceled out among its Indian inhabitants. Each man, woman and child of the tribe will be given 160 acres of land. The remainder of the reserved territory is to be thrown open for settlement by the whites.

This change in their lot means the giving over of the formerly great and warlike Ute tribe to the ways of civilization. When they have become personal landed proprietors, their ancient tribal institutions and customs, their proneness to indulging in occasional scalp taking and their generally predatory disposition will speedily pass away from them, perforce. In fact, they are likely in a few years to settle down into ranchmen, not a whit more inclined to the war dance or the chase than their paleface neighbors in Montezuma county.

Any day now the announcement that will preface the passing of the Utes as warriors and hunters may be looked for in the press dispatches. It will be an event in the chronological history of their tribe.

THE UTE NATION.

The Utes are not indigenous to this section of the country, as many suppose. When the first Colorado settlers came here these Indians consisted of several tribes, numbering in all about 6,000 persons, having possession of the mountain districts. The tribes were confederated for mutual protection, and the boundary lines of the territory were well fortified by strong bands of warriors, and a well organized "runner" system kept all well informed of any threatened danger, the head chief of the nation being in constant communication with each other. One tribe was stationed in North park, another on White river, another in Middle and South park, the fourth scattered up and down the valleys of the San Luis, Uncompahgre and Grand rivers. The entrances to the valleys of the Platte and Arkansas rivers were closely guarded to prevent intrusion. The Utes were not hostile to the early settlers, who found them kindly disposed and speaking a mixed language, consisting mainly of the lingo prevailing in Old Mexico among the Indians and the peons. In fact, for many years, men who followed the lonely vocation of trapping the streams and lakes of Colorado had lived among these Indians, and they had come to think well of the white man, and rather favored the advent of the settlers as a support against their greatly outnumbering enemies, the Pawnees, Cheyennes, Arrapahoes and other tribes living on the plains. Any stray hunting party of plains Indians getting too close to the foothills were swooped down upon and a scalp dance about the Ute lodges proclaimed the victorious result. A tradition sung in the native tongue proclaims how the enemies tried to invade their home, and the dogs feasted on the scalpless remains strewn in gulch and on mountain side. They seemed to consider that if the whites could fight their way across the plains they were good neighbors to have.

THEIR FORMER HOME.

There is no doubting that the Utes have lived in this section of the country for a century or more, but according to their traditions they were driven from far south to the plains of southern Colorado, and were forced by other warlike tribes to flee from the plains to the mountains. It is told by them that they were led by a great chief, who came in a cloud, to the mountains, carrying a burning campfire in his hands, the cloud surrounding them and entirely obscuring them from the view of their pursuers. As soon as they were safely in the mountains the great chief told them it was their land forever and disappeared. The cloud lifted and settled upon their enemies, bewildering them, and they were stricken by fire, which came out of the vapory surroundings.

I often questioned the chiefs about the history of their tribe, and one day Shavenau took me to an old squaw, who, he said, was the wife of a chief before Ouray's time, and who was more than 100 years old. She might have been 500, so far as appearances went. She was blind, partially deaf, toothless, shrunken and mumified, with hair short cropped and as white as a ball of cotton yarn. The old woman had not reported at the agency for a number of years, but remained at the camp, and was moved about the same as any of the luggage when a change of location was made. She received more care than the aged usually do, said to be due to the request of Ouray before he died, to whom she was probably related.

A CENTENARIAN'S RECOLLECTIONS.

It was sometime before the interpreter of Shavenau could make her understand what was wanted. By persistent questioning and reference to former talks they had had with her, they finally got her mind in working form. Shavenau steadily using the words: "Maypoots natchits peshadny," meaning "very little girl talk." Finally the old spring was reopened and the waters began to flow. Her utterances, though the voice was harsh and cracked, were indistinct owing to her wornout gums, the result of the pernicious habit of chewing wax in which the Indian women greatly indulge. This wax is formed of raw bitumen and suet, and is as resistless as rubber, squeaking between an active pair of jaws like new boots.

The old woman said that when she was a "maypoots natchits," a little girl, she lived way down where it was "all summer," as Shavenau interpreted it. She told of her father, a big chief, and a long war the tribe had with other Indians in the Uncapah country, meaning "Redwater," possibly in the vicinity of the Red river. That her tribe was defeated and driven up until snowland was reached, and a fierce snowstorm forced them into camp by a river which Shavenau said was the Rio del Norte.

Many of the old men, squaws and children died from frostbites, and when the sun, meaning spring, came again, they were "all very sick and heap tired." A few ponies remained to them, poor and nearly starved, and having seen nothing of their pursuers all this time they started out to prospect for buffalo grounds. Strange to say they had not traveled more than a day or two before they came upon the camp of their enemies in an equally or more demoralized condition than they had been.

A TRIBAL AMALGAMATION.

They, too, had been caught by the great fall of snow, were unable to retrace their trail and forced into winter camp, enduring hardships not before known to them. Apparently all fight had vanished from both tribes, the tomahawk was buried, the pipe passed around, both tribes agreed to unite and "maypoots natchits" became the bride of one of the young warriors in the due course of time.

The united bands roved in the vicinity of the Spanish peaks, for the old lady mentioned the name Wahatoia, by which name the sightly mountains were called by them, and there is no doubt that Zebulon Pike, when he made a tour of New Louisiana in 1807, fell in with this very tribe of Indians in that vicinity. His writings and the story told by the old woman connect very nicely.

When asked when she saw the first white man, she said on the river by Wahatoia, which Shavenau said was the Purgatoire river. She said a band of white-faced warriors came to their village and one of them spoke their language. The men were about shoeless, and the squaws made them stout moccasins of elk hide.

Pike, in his report of his trip up the Arkansas river and the discovery of the famous peak bearing his name, which he mapped as the "highest" mountain in the Snow White range, bore off south towards Santa Fe, and says he fell in with a tribe of savages, making the happy discovery that Baroney Vasquez, the interpreter, who spoke French and Spanish, could converse with them. The Indians were friendly disposed and he remained in their camp several days, resting and exchanging supplies and gathering information about the country. He referred to the tribe as the Kapotas, which leaves no doubt that they were the Utes, for they were, when located by the early settlers of Colorado, found to consist of the Uncompahgre Utes, the Weeminuche Utes, Capota, Moache Uintah Tabawatchie and other gands, and Utes, and a lapse of 90 years has not materially changed the manner of spelling Capota.

MIXED ON RELATIONSHIP.

The old woman spoke of Ouray, but I could not understand the connection, either from the interpreter or Shavenau. In consanguineal explanations the Indians get badly mixed. She said that Ouray was her boy and Shavenau claimed to be Ouray's brother, but he couldn't tell whether this woman was his mother or not. He said she was his sister, but when I compared their ages by appearances, he said she was Ouray's mother, so I let the matter drop at that. The old lady did not forget to mention "bonocker," as we turned away, and I gave Shavenau a silver coin which he placed in her hand, remarking that she would send to the trader's store for a can of peaches. Ouray only survived the neighborship of the whites for a few years, comparatively, but he made the most of it while it lasted. He was diplomatic and worked both sides of the street at the same time, keeping his people in line for peace and getting what he wanted from the authorities at Washington. He died soon after the White river Utes perpetrated the Meeker massacre, and since then the bands have been confined to three agencies, two in Utah and one in Colorado. Chipeta, his wife, married again and again as a widow, living with her people on the mesas contiguous to Green river.

While Ouray was notoriously passive, other chiefs of the tribe were vindictive and mischievous, and sometimes he found it hard to keep them in control. Often they were ordered away to remote parts of the mountains to remain until they could come back home and be "good," and thus it was that a number of bands, numbering from 50 to 400 Indians, were found in different parts of the state, a menace to prospectors and hunters. Colorow roamed in Middle Park and along the Grand river; Piah claimed North Park as his country; Douglas claimed the White river country, and White Antelope took to the Yampah river country. In early days, Colorow and Piah often came to Denver, but none of the roving bands have visited the city within the past 18 years. Ignacio, Buckskin Charley, Mariano, Tapuche and Tabewatch have always remained very close to the southern portion of the state and but little has been known of them until the last few years, when they have come into prominence as the chiefs of the only surviving bands left in Colorado.

THE WARLIKE SHAVENAU.

Of all the chiefs that entertained a straightout warlike disposition towards the whites and ever stood ready to take up the warclub and wield it to the bitter end, Shavenau headed the list. His greatest concern was the welfare of his people, so much so that he was oftentimes meddlesome. However, he was admirably controlled by Ouray and when that chief died Shavenau was entitled to succeed him, but the Washington authorities were afraid of him and manipulated the affair by an election. Unaccustomed to political intrigues, enough of the headmen were "handled" to throw the election to Sappovonaro, a regular stick-in-the-mud compared to the wily old Shavenau, and during his influence Shavenau had the most influence of any man in the tribe of Uncompahgres. He was vigilant and ever maintained to his people that the country and everything in it belonged to them, and aside from the conviction that he had a right to appropriate everything he wanted, he had many favorable traits. He was frank and fearless in his utterances. Shavenau's name was Tar-boo-cha-ket, but he was never called that. The Robideaux fur traders gave him the name of Chaveneaux, and when he was enrolled at Los Pinos the name was written Shavenau.

During my acquaintance with him many interesting incidents occurred. One day I stepped behind the house occupied by the agent and myself to get an armful of wood. Shavenau rode up to ask me about the new agent who arrived the night before, one of Mr. Cleveland's appointments. We were near the bedroom window where the agent slept, and standing on the windowsill within was a tall flask of elegant looking red stuff which caught the old chief's attention at once. His eyes gleamed as he called my notice to it and asked if it was "whisk." I thought it was medicine and paid no more attention to the matter.

THEIR LOVE OF FIREWATER.

It was ration day at the agency and an hour later all the head men and chiefs were gathered in the office discussing the new agent. Shavenau came in and there was a flush on his face, a glitter in his eyes which attracted my attention at once. Smiling in a mellow way to me he went through the motions of drawing his hunting knife, ripping the wire netting with the point of it, tapping the window pane with the butt of the handle, abstracting the flash, pulling the cork, taking a smell, then a taste, then a long pull at the imaginary fluid, which explained his mazy condition. Later on, going to the house, I ascertained the truth of the pantomime, also that the bottle contained rum and syrup, the new man was taking for a cold, and that Shavenau had drank nearly half of it—a very palatable mixture for an Indian.

Indians are readily infatuated with the taste of "cunapah," or firewater, to such a degree that they will drink anything containing alcohol or stimulant. They will drink jamaica ginger or any kind of a mixture, and every precaution has to be provided to guard them from intoxication, for they will take any and every advantage. The trader carried in stock essences for use in the mess, and while he would not sell a bottle to an Indian he had to keep it hidden to prevent them from stealing it. One time Augustine took advantage of a new trader and sounded him for a bottle of vanilla extract. He got it, and feeling his way carefully, kept buying another bottle and another until he had a dozen bottles stored in his blanket, the trader congratulating himself on the good trade that he was driving at 75 cents a bottle. Half an hour later the vanilla was cutting up some queer antics with two or three Indians, who were as full as the proverbial goat. They drank it for the effects of the alcohol it contained.

The new agent I have mentioned was appointed from Texas, and, of course, was a Democrat. The Indians had never known anything of politics but Republicans, and were curious to learn what kind of an animal a Democrat was. This man being an extreme one did not take kindly to the pictures of Grant, Logan and Lincoln adorning the office walls, and in the presence of the Indians made slurring remarks about the men. That settled it, for the Indians looked upon these men as their good friends. They came to the conclusion that a Democrat was "no bueno."

One night an Indian boy came to my room and said Shavenau wanted to see me at a cabin which was used as a sleeping house by the Indians. On entering I found a bright fire burning in the fireplace and some 15 or 20 chiefs and head men sitting on the floor of the single room. The pipe was going around in silence as I entered, and I waited about five minutes before a word was said. Then Shavenau asked me if I liked the new agent. The agent and I disagreed politically, but otherwise were on good terms and so I replied to the inquiry. That I disagreed with him politically seemed to strike them favorably. After a moment's deliberation Shavenau looked at me in a significant manner and drew his forefinger across his forehead, just below the scalp, continuing to whiff the pipe.

Professionally, here was a scoop and from a newspaper standpoint the chief was evidently my friend. The New York Herald would have paid $200 for the information and would have stood the courier expenses to Price station, the nearest telegraph office, 80 miles distant.

TALKED OUT OF IT.

"You no tell," remarked the chief, and as it dawned upon me that they were contemplating the assassination and scalping of the agent I felt my blood freezing within me. Was I standing on the verge of a massacre? I knew not whether to go at once to the agent with the information or to try to talk the Indians out of it. Finally I told Shavenau that this man had many friends among the big chiefs at Washington who had command of all the soldiers, and if they did this thing the government would punish them severely. I was listened to in silence and Shavenau motioned to me to retire, again admonished me not to talk. Sappovonaro was not present, neither was Charley Shavenau. The next day I got hold of Charley. I felt that I could trust him, and asked him about it. He said: 'Utes no like this Democrat; mebbe 'nother man come then all right here." He said they would ask him to go away. I let the matter rest and one day the agent bade us goodbye, taking the stage to the station en route to Chicago, though he did not stop until he landed in Washington and had notified the Indian department of the precarious condition of affairs at the agency. The result of the trip was the establishment of Fort Duchesne on the reservation. He resigned, however, and never returned.

The situation was an anxious one at all times, for we only numbered about seven or eight persons in all, while there were nearly 1,300 Indians on the reservation, and it took, under ordinary circumstances, three days to get a message to Fort Bridger, the nearest military post, a distance of 175 miles.

SHAVANAU'S DEATH.

Shavenau's death was due to a superstition prevailing among the Indians that under certain conditions one person can poison another by placing the subtle matter in a frequented trail, or can acquire a venom so penetrating and hateful that it can be thought or wished into the system of another person with deadly effect. An old Indian named Sarrup had two boys ailing with indigestion, undoubtedly, and none of the medicine men were able to heal them. Finally Shavenau, who hung out a shingle as a medicine man, was sent for. He went through the usual incantations, and the next day, after severe vomiting, the boys died. There is as much rivalry among Indian doctors as can be found in the profession anywhere in the world, and some fellow actuated by jealousy, no doubt, told Sarrup that Shaveneau had poisoned the boys. The next Saturday, while the Indians were gathering at the agency for rations, Shaveneau was standing in front of the trader's store with some of his kinsmen, and was telling a couple of the agency employees how the reservation was shrinking, getting smaller all the time and the whites were crowding closer and closer upon them, his usual complaint, when Sarrup rode up to within 30 feet and like a flash whipped out a revolver, firing it at him. No matters what happens, an Indian never expresses surprise. For an instant no one moved. Then Shaveneau dropped, his assailant turned his horse around and rode away a few paces, when he again turned towards the store just in time to see one of Shaveneau's friends, named Wilson, draw his revolver to shoot him. Then followed a display of the wonderful keenness of the Indian eye and the panther-like agility they possess. Sarrup emptied his revolver at Wilson, who crouched like a springing lion, with his eyes glued to that weapon, dodging this way and that, at every shot, and escaped being hit. Sarrup rode around a building, Wilson getting in a shot on him just as he rounded the corner.

EXCITEMENT IN CAMP.

There were only about 200 Indians in at the time, but as soon as the shooting began the squaws and children were swarming like a nest of yellow jackets. Charley Shaveneau, a son of the old chief, and the present chief of the tribe, lived in a cabin 100 yards distant and was notified at once what had happened. He kneeled in his doorway, aiming a Winchester at the retreating Sarrup, and Galota, another friend of Shaveneau's, who had run to his wagon back of the store for a rifle, took aim across the wagon wheel, and both men fired at the same time, shooting the Indian through and through; tottering an instant, he fell dead.

As it happened, most of the male Indians present were Shavenau's friends, but there were a number of squaws and young fellows from Sarrup's village and several of the latter hastily mounted their ponies and sped away to the camps to notify Sarrup's friends. Others hastened to the camps of Shavenau's friends and indications of an inter-tribal war were very strong.

Shavenau was taken to the agency physician's quarters and the doctor said he must soon die. This information enraged the chief's friends. Some of them went to the spot where the body of Sarrup was lying; his pony was still standing there and the lariat was loosened, one end was tied about the feet of the dead Indian and the other end wound around the horn of the saddle. In this fashion the riddled corpse was dragged to the river through the sagebrush, over beds of gravel, and plunged in. The horse was shot and tumbled in also, and for a while quiet prevailed, everybody waiting for the clash expected when the two factions would meet later during the day.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.

The situation was not a comfortable one for the agent and the white men associated with him. Incoming Indians hearing of the affair took sides at once. The prominent men came to the agency and the women and children were sent to the willows along the river bank. The agent called Sapovonaro and others to his office in council, but they declared that nothing could be done until all were together, and when Shavenau died that would probably settle it, as the Mosaic law prevailed among them. Nothing but a life for a life would satisfy, no matter if Sarrup was the attacking party. He was dead, and someone must pay the penalty, either Shavenau or some of his family.

Sarrup had a brother named Wap-e-nas camped in the hills about 20 miles distant. A runner was sent to his camp, and abut the middle of the afternoon he came dashing into the agency, with a band of followers, panting for revenge. He inquired about his brother at once, and learning the disposition that had been made of the body immediately asked for Shavenau, expressing a determination to kill him. He was armed with a Winchester and had two belts of cartridges about his waist. It took considerable talking to convince him that Shavenau would die, but accepting the statement of the doctor, he was finally induced to go away, though threatening to return in the morning to finish the work begun by his brother if Shavenau did not die.

The move was a fortunate one for the agent, and averting further bloodshed, for Wilson, with about 60 warriors, was concealed in the willows, within gunshot of the house in which Shavenau was lying, and had the ferocious Wap-e-nas started towards the place, he and his followers would have been mowed down by the bullets from Wilson's party.

Waiting for Shavenau to die was the situation in which we found ourselves, and we hoped he would, speedily, if it would put an end to the pending conflict. We were helpless so far as protection was to be thought of, and there was not much use of trying to get away, for it was 30 miles across a desert to the nearest settlement. We felt no certainty that when the killing began we would be let alone. To further help the matter along, Wass, one of Shavenau's followers, rode in that evening wild with Mormon whisky. A runner had been to his camp and he stopped en route to fortify himself, and came in urging his horse to its utmost speed, his person divested of everything but a pair of breeches, a cartridge belt and a revolver. He whooped at every plunge of his panting pony. A cur ran out barking at him and a shot from Wass' revolver killed the dog. Wass rode up to the agency and gave it out cold that he was after blood, though the place was deserted by all but Shavenau's friends.

As night came a strong guard of Shavenau's warriors were strung across the mesa and we were warned to keep out of sight. Two of our number were stationed in the stables with several of the best horses saddled ready for emergency, and the balance took refuge in the trader's store, a strongly built structure of cottonwood logs, not far from the stables.

About midnight a messenger came to us and said that the old chief was dead. It was a relief to know this much. In the morning runners were sent out carrying the news to Wap-e-na's camp, and he returned the word that he was satisfied.

As soon as daylight came a number of young Indians were sent out to the ranges and shot 20 or 30 of the old chief's best horses and several cows, goats and sheep, in accordance with the usual custom. In the village Shavenau's squaw, his girls and other female relatives clipped their hair short, and the sounds of the death wail reached the agency, three miles distant.

The agency carpenter was asked to make the coffin for the old man's interment and the size marked on the ground was about 5 feet by 6 feet. It was three feet in depth when completed. On a prominent knoll, within sight of the agency, the burial place was selcted, and three or four Mexican peons, lounging about Shavenau's village, were detailed to dig the grave. When a common, everyday Ute dies he generally gets tucked away in a ravine where the labor of digging a grave can be avoided and stone be found for the covering. But in this case they went beyond the usual custom.

The box was placed in the grave, then in the bottom was laid a mattress, which, the old man prized very highly, and that was covered with fine Navajo blankets. Other blankets of the same kind were placed over the corpse and then friends and relatives began placing in their offerings until the box was filled with a sack of flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, cooking utensils, a saddle and bridle, knife, revolver, rifle, ammunition, a buffalo robe, furs, money and trinkets, etc., all for his use in the happy hunting grounds.

There was no ceremony; the peons arranged everything as directed by the chiefs. The family of the dead chief was present and the squaws of the tribes were there to join in the death wail, each trying, seemingly, to make it more hideous than the other. No, not all of the squaws were there, for an occasional wail came up from the distant river bottom in answer to those echoed from the knoll, adding a feature of weirdness to the closing drama, demonstrating that the old squaws might be decrepid and tied to their "wickiups" by infirmities, but that that death wail was something that remained the same forever, a characteristic that could not be "civilized" out of their nature. And, though coming from throats faltering on the borderland of eternity, the wails were vigorous enough to vibrate among the teppes of the happy hunting ground. With a weird softness, low and distinct, like the prolonged tone of a flute, it floated out from among the willows, lingering on the ear like the inviting note of a houri on the borders of enchantment; then changing, not unlike the howl of a hungry coyote scenting the campfire aroma from a distance, breaking into hyenaical chatterings and winding up like a shriek of anguish of lost souls driven into the burning pits of perdition.

If there is anything that an old squaw is expected to excel in it is the death wail, and the nearer she laps on the home stretch the more spirit and originality she throws into it. It is something that comes with age and experience and the near approach of the end, and no young squaw can compare with the superannuated. Neither men nor the young are permitted to exercise the privileges of that wail.

The peons built a strong framed structure, roofed and gabled like a house, with no opening on either side by which admittance could be be gained for the purpose of desecration. A Greek cross over the structure, perched on one of the gables, marks the resting place of one of the widely known and typical chiefs of the Utes.

STANLEY STOKES in Colorado Republican.

BASEBALL YARNS.

Old Pete Browning has practically dropped out of baseball, but he will always be remembered as one of the queerest old chaps who ever played the game. He was a wonderful batter in his day, but had a weakness for foaming breakers, which finally brought him down.

Upon one occasion, after Pete had won the batting championship of the American association, the cranks of Louisville, in order to show their appreciation of the "Gladiator's" work, made up a purse and purchased a fine gold watch. A citizen was delegated to present the timepiece to Browning, and when Pete came to bat in the first inning of a certain game, the citizen stepped forward and, raising his cap, said:

"Mister Browning, the people of Louisville, in recognition of your great batting this year, wish me to present you with this watch, which will always remind you of their friendship."

Pete took the watch out of its case, turned it over in his wrinkled hand, and then, turning to the donor, he said: "Where is the chain?"

Bill Schriver, the Cincinnati catcher, was a trifle green when he first signed with the Brooklyn club a dozen years ago. Bill was a typical countryman, but was such a promising ballplayer that the Brooklyn club decided to take him on a western trip.

"Where are we going?" Bill asked the manager, as they boarded the train at Jersey City.

"Out west," was the laconic reply. Then Bill sat beside a window and gazed at the country, passing rapidly by. When the train reached Newark, Schriver looked around at the other players and then sank back in his seat. He was apparently nervous about something and kept fidgiting until the train rolled into Trenton. Then he grabbed his valise and batbag and moved rapidly towards the door.

"Hey, there Bill!" yelled the players, "where are you going?"

"Why, ain't this the end of our route?" asked the catcher. "How much further have we got to travel, anyhow?" When Bill finally reached St. Louis he was in a sort of trance.

Ball players thrive on good food when they are traveling. Some of them go through the bill of fare at the big hotels like hungry tramps at a cottage door. Several years ago the New Yorks were in Louisville. Dad Clarke and Eddie Burke were sitting at the table together, and Eddie said to Dad:

"You give the order!"

Dad picked up the "programme" and was confronted with a long list of French dishes, which Dad wouldn't have attempted to pronounce for big money.

"Come here!" yelled Dad to the waiter, "and don't be swelling up in that dress suit!" Then Dad put his forefinger on the bill of fare and let it slide down past the various names.

"Gimme some o' that!

"Bring me a lot o' that!

"I want plenty o' that!

"Lug along a dish o' this!

"Gimme a pile o' that stuff, and have it good. See!"

"Wee! Wee!" said the waiter, who turned inquiringly to Burke. Eddie waived him off with the imperious request:

"Bring me the same!"